



# The Order



Newsletter team from L-R:  
Andrew, Edward, Ernest, Greg &  
Donald

## CONTENTS

### PAGE 2

#### NEW YEAR THANKSGIVING MASS

#### CNY OUTREACH TO ASSISI HOSPICE

#### ANNUAL RETREAT

### PAGE 3

#### ANNIVERSARY OF POPE FRANCIS' PONTIFICATE

#### MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR LEE KUAN YEW

Founding Father of Singapore

#### PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES

with extension to Malta

### PAGE 7

#### MEMORIAL OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST

### PAGE 8

#### THE SPIRITUALITY OF FALCONRY

### PAGE 9

#### UPDATE ON ARCHBISHOP EMERITUS NICHOLAS CHIA

#### UPCOMING EVENTS

## From the Editor's Desk

The events of the past six months culminated in the Singapore SMOM Annual Pilgrimage to Lourdes in May, followed by a visit to Malta, a historical place that housed the Order for 268 years in the 16th and 17th centuries. In this edition, we also feature an interesting article related to our Order on 'Falconry'. The next exciting event will be the SG50 Mass to be celebrated by the Singapore Archdiocese on 4th July at the Singapore Indoor Stadium. Our Association has been tasked to help organise the Mass segment of the celebrations. We pray for the success of the Event as we celebrate 50 years of history of modern Singapore.

## Call for Articles for this Newsletter

This is a general call for members of The Singapore Association of the Order of Malta and their friends and companions to submit articles of interest for our bi-annual newsletter.

Deadline for submission is December 4 for the January 2016 issue and June 5 for the July 2016 issue of the newsletter.

All submissions will be subject to examination by the editorial team and it will be at the discretion of the editorial team whether the article will be published and if it will be edited for accuracy or relevance.

Each article is to be no more than 500 words. For every 100 words, it is preferred but not compulsory if there is an accompanying graphic, picture or photo in electronic form.

Articles may be written using any of the current word processing software such as MS Word, iWork pages or similar.

Subject matter is left to the creativity of the author but it is preferred if said article is about The Order: its activities, plans, news, historical or political perspectives or articles of faith.

All submissions to be sent to:

Andrew Kwok Wai Mun at:

[waimun43@gmail.com](mailto:waimun43@gmail.com)

8 January 2015

## Thanksgiving New Year Mass

Many members and friends turned up at the Mt. Alvernia Chapel to celebrate the Thanksgiving New Year Mass on 8 Jan 2015. Rev Fr Colin Tan was the celebrant. His homily highlighted the purpose of serving God and that our actions should not be motivated by self-interest but by love. As members of the Order, we can mediate the compassion of Christ by being good Samaritans in bringing about meaning to the lives of people in captivity. We must be empathetic in order to give healing realizing that each person is a treasure trove of Christ-like love. The event ended with dinner and fellowship at the Singapore Island Country Club.



13 February 2015

## CNY Outreach to Assisi Hospice

Both familiar and new faces greeted the members and associates of SMOM-Singapore when they visited Assisi Hospice on 13 February 2015 to bring some festive joy during the Lunar New Year period. Packets of goodies and "ang paws" were distributed to the residents as the members chatted with them and prayed over those in need. We met a spirited new resident named Brother Dennis from the Gabrielite brothers. He was born in Canada and spent almost 50 years in Singapore as a teacher in Montfort and St. Gabriel's Secondary School. Brother Dennis is a well-loved teacher with a good sense of humor. Before leaving, the members bid the residents farewell with a gentle smile and thanked the caregivers of Assisi Home for giving the residents comfort and peace of mind in their loving care.



7 March 2015

## Retreat

### Retreat Master Fr. Dr. Edward Lim

It was 9 am on 7 March 2015 when the retreat master Fr. Edward Lim, a Carmelite priest, started his lecture by jokingly claiming that he was "very stressed" to be among senior members of the Order who were his teachers during medical school. Held at the Kingsmead Spirituality Centre with a good attendance, it did not take long for everyone to be at ease with each other. The retreat helped the attendees reflect more deeply on the teachings of the Beatitudes exemplified by the virtues of St. John the Baptist. The Beatitudes encapsulated the very heart of Jesus' preachings. A better understanding



was developed of the internal disposition that Jesus taught, not only manifesting as the virtuous outward actions but also leading to true happiness here on earth. The Body must conform to doing good in pursuit of Christian values. During the retreat, members were also reminded to stay faithful to our Charism and to experience a deeper relationship with God. In the lively sharing sessions, members were asked to expand the kingdom of God in Singapore by integrating the 2 cardinal pillars of SMOM - "Tuito Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum" in the New Evangelization effort. It was indeed a Saturday well spent away from the hustle and bustle of the secular world we live in. The retreat was a much-needed oasis for all, to listen to and speak with God. The retreat ended with Eucharistic Celebration. All were spiritually recharged and fired up to be of service to God and others.



15 March 2015

## 2nd Anniversary Of The Pontificate Of Pope Francis

SMOM Singapore was invited to participate in the 10am Eucharistic celebration held at St. Joseph Church - Victoria Street in conjunction with the 2nd Anniversary of Pope Francis' Pontificate on 15 March 2015. The mass was celebrated by His Excellency Archbishop Leo Girelli the regional Apostolic Nuncio and concelebrated by Archbishop William Goh. During the homily, Archbishop William Goh stressed on the importance of New Evangelisation in reaching out to those believers who are lost especially the non-believers who were led astray by the entrapments of the secular world. Mercy and

compassion shown in a non-judgmental way paves the approach in New Evangelisation.

The Pope is well respected because he spoke the language of mercy and compassion. A call was made to the faithful to be truly converted before converting others, by serious reflection on cooperation with works of mercy wrought by God in our personal lives and thereby renewing our faith in God so that we may proclaim his mercy through outreach during social missions. At the end of the eucharistic celebration, His Excellency Archbishop Girelli thanked Archbishop William Goh for his inspiring homily and asked the congregation to continue to pray for the Holy Father. Members of SMOM Singapore together with others thereafter hosted His Excellency Girelli to lunch at the Tratoria Lafiandra restaurant @ Singapore Art Museum.



27 March 2015

## Memorial Service for Mr. Lee Kuan Yew Founding father of Singapore

Mr Lee Kuan Yew, the first prime minister of Singapore, passed away peacefully on 23 March 2015. About five thousand Catholics attended the special memorial Mass for the founding father of Singapore at St Joseph's Church in Victoria Street. The Church was full to the brim with hundreds spilling out into the Church compound standing under the hot sun throughout the Mass.

The hour-long Mass was celebrated by His Grace, Archbishop William Goh, and concelebrated by the Apostolic Nuncio together with about forty other priests in attendance. Sir Peter Low and the Cathedral Choir provided the music for the Mass. The event was well represented by fifteen members/associates/spouses from the Order of Malta. During his homily, Archbishop Goh paid tribute to the late Mr Lee Kuan Yew and expressed admiration as Mr Lee stood by his convictions and beliefs. Mr Lee's notable achievement was in fostering religious harmony by initiating inter-religious dialogue in Singapore.



1 - 10 May 2015

## Annual Pilgrimage to Lourdes with Extension to Malta

There were 38 pilgrims to Lourdes of which 22 travelled to Malta as well.

The pre-pilgrimage mass was celebrated by Fr. Gino on Tuesday, 21 April 2015 at 6 pm at the Mt. Alvernia Hospital Chapel. Pilgrims, relatives and friends attended the celebration. In his homily, Fr. Gino said that life itself, and indeed the mass is a form of pilgrimage – a journey towards God and any place hallowed by His presence on earth. We travelled to Lourdes on 30 April 2015 on Lufthansa Airlines. After a few hours bus journey from Toulouse, we arrived at our Solitude Hotel in the morning of Friday 1 May 2015. The hotel is within short walking distance from the Lourdes Sanctuary.





Our guide Ms Angeline Tang then led us to the important sites in Lourdes: the Massabielle Grotto where St Bernadette experienced apparitions of our blessed Mother 18 times; the Immaculate Conception Basilica; the Rosary Basilica; the Crypt; the Baths; Chapel of St Maximilian Kolbe; underground Basilica of Pope Pius X; the Sacred Heart Church (Église Paroissiale Du Sacre-Coeur), Lourdes which housed the baptismal font of St Bernadette, the Boly Mill and the Cachot where the impoverished Bernadette lived.



After lunch, some of the pilgrims went to the Baths next to the Grotto where they waited for more than three hours to have a cold dip in the waters of healing spring. It was an uplifting experience for us.

At 6:00 pm on that day, Fr Gino conducted Mass at the Chapelle St Maximilian Kolbe, which was named after the saint who willingly offered his life in the place of another prisoner at the infamous Auschwitz death camp. The Mass culminated in the anointment of the sick.

At 09:45 am, Saturday 2 May 2015, Fr Gino celebrated Mass at the Grotto with a group of American as well as Filipino priests. It was very moving with so many malades and their care-givers (Knights and Dames of the Order of Malta) among the congregation fervently praying with the priests to God for deliverance and healing through Mary. This is the holy spot that St. Bernardette had apparitions of the "Immaculate Conception".



At 9:00 pm later in the day, our pilgrim group was at the Église Ste. Bernadette for the distribution of Medals for first time Pilgrims.

Next came the highlight of the Lourdes pilgrimage - the International Mass on Sunday 3 May 2015 at 09:30 am, concelebrated by several priests from different nations. Prayers and hymns were sung in 6 languages: English, French, Italian, Spanish, German and Dutch. It was held in the underground Basilica St. Pius X and was well attended by malades, their attendants (Knights and Dames and associates

of the SMOM). The endless

procession of Cardinals, Bishops and priests, the uplifting hymns by the choir and soloists with the accompaniment of the organ, and fervent prayers helped to bring the mass to its spiritual peak in the Holy Communion.

A few of us prayed at the 'Stations of the Cross' up the Lourdes "Calvary Hill". It was challenging physically as it was quite steep. The golden-coloured and larger than life figures helped us to better identify with the pain and the suffering of Christ during His Passion. We also appreciated the beautiful a capella harmonic hymns of the talented Spanish group just before us. For the less physically fit among us

pilgrims, we opted for an easier 'Stations of the Cross' at the flat field of the Prairie.

Some of us took part in the Candle-light Marian Procession and Rosary at night. The candlelight represented baptism. The Statue of our Lady of Lourdes was carried and processed in the open air of the sanctuary while the rosary was recited and sung. The myriad flickering lights of the candles in the dark and the ethereal chanting of the rosary in the night seemed to send their prayers straight to God in Heaven through Mary.

Finally Rev. Fr. Gino conducted a prayerful debrief of our Lourdes pilgrimage. As we related our "God Experience or Encounters" among ourselves, we were surprised

that so many of us were "touched" by God in the hustle and bustle of this French town. More than a few of us experienced healing in both body and spirit.



## The Malta Pilgrimage

Day 1, Tuesday, 5th May 2015

Those going onto Malta left the Singapore bound group at Frankfurt. The Maltese leg of the pilgrimage began when we arrived at the Malta International Airport. We were met by Mr Dane Munro our local guide who is a Knight of the Order in Malta who is also a professor of anthropology.

The island republic of Malta is less than half the size of Singapore. Unlike Singapore it has over seven thousand years of history. Because of its strategic position in the Mediterranean Sea, it was occupied at different times by the Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Byzantines, the Arabs, the Normans, the Angevines, Aragonese, the French and the British. The current population is about 400,000. Incidentally, St Paul was shipwrecked in AD 60 near Malta and he sowed the seeds of Christianity in Malta where Roman Catholicism is the predominant religion. There are now an astounding 359 churches scattered among the tiny islands of Malta.

### Day 2, Wednesday, 6 May 2015 (Valletta)

In the morning we had a conducted tour of the capital city of Valletta, named after the great Grand Master Fra' Jean Parisot de la Valette followed by a visit to the Jerosolimitan Nuns of the Church and Monastery of Saint Ursula where we attended morning Mass. This monastery of the Order of St John is still a living legacy of the Order and is host to the skull relic of Blessed Gerard the founder of the Order of St John.



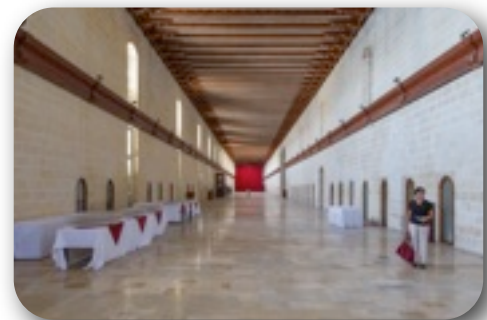
We then took a short walk to the Mediterranean Conference Centre for the Knights Hospitaller Exhibition where the noble medical works of the Knights Hospitallers were shown mainly in the form of waxworks as well as the display of many surgical and medical appliances. These Hospitallers then had a higher standard of medical practice than their contemporaries in the rest of the world.

The most remarkable feature is the Sacra Infermeria (Holy Infirmary) which started treating patients from Malta and Gozo as well as foreigners irrespective of creed and nationality from the end of the 16th century. A plaque in the Infermeria read:

Our Lords the Sick  
In memory of all those brave and humble  
Servants of the sick, who sacrificed  
Their life in the name of Christ,  
And of all the Lords who were served  
In this building – The Sacra Infermeria  
Of the Order of St. John.

The original building of the Infermeria was one continuous hall 155 metres long, 10.5 metres wide and 11 metres high. At that time it was one of the largest halls in Europe forming one of the “grandest interiors in the world”. It had the capacity of about 600 beds and a space for 900 in case of emergencies.

We then went nearby for the awesome audio-visual show, the Malta Experience which narrated the turbulent 7000 year history of this tiny island nation from pre-historic temples, immigration of different peoples, the Knights Hospitallers, the Great Siege, the silent city of Mdina and the fortified walls of Valletta.



After lunch, a short walk took us to a heritage site, the Grand Master's Palace and Armoury which is now the Office of the President of Malta. The spartan exterior of the Palace belies the sumptuous and luxurious interior. There are two spacious courtyards, broad corridors, a Throne Room, an Ambassadors Hall, a Main Dining Room, a Tapestry Chamber, the Grand Council Chamber and the Palace Armoury at the Basement. The latter contains more than 500 suits of 16th - 18th century armours and weaponry.



Perhaps, the highlight of the day was the visit to St John's Co-Cathedral, the conventual church of the Order of Malta. It was built by the Knights of Malta between 1573 and 1578 after they had successfully defeated the Ottoman Turks in the Great Siege of 1565.

The external façade of the Cathedral is austere and plain. The ornate interior is stunningly beautiful. It has intricately carved stone walls, painted side altars and a vaulted ceiling. Under the marble floor exists an entire series of tombs of 375 knights and officers of the Order. There are also crypts containing the tombs of the grandmasters like Jean Parisot de la Valette. The icon of the Virgin of Philermos is in the Chapel of Our Lay of Philermos of this Cathedral.



### Day 3, Thursday 7th May 2015



In the morning we set out for the Blue Grotto which consists of a number of sea caverns off the south coast of Malta where the waters have a special blue hue, east of the fishermen's harbour of Wied Iz Zurrieq.

Our next stop was Birgu also known as Città Vittoriosa, the old fortified city of the south side of the Grand Harbour. It is one of the three fortified cities in the east of Malta. Some of us took a gondola boat ride through the Grand Harbour to view Fort Angelo from the outside. It was called Città Vittoriosa because the people of the City played a vital role in the defeat of the Ottoman Siege. While in Birgu, we visited St Lawrence Church. When the Knights Hospitallers settled in Malta in 1530, all the langues (major administrative divisions) were based in Birgu. The Church of St. Lawrence

was used as the Order's first conventual church. We participated in the Holy Mass there. After lunch at the Birgu waterfront, we had a leisurely tour of the quiet streets of the Collachio where the Knights of the Order used to live.

We then returned to Valletta and visited St Paul's Shipwreck Church. We prayed and venerated the relic of his right wrist bone. We viewed a part of the column from San Paolo alle Tre Fontane on which the saint was beheaded in Rome.

The last visit of the day was that of Casa Rocca Piccola in Valletta. This is the luxurious house of the Marquis and Marchesa. They are both members of the Order. There is a large volume of artistic works, antiques and paintings. The owner gave a humorous account of his genealogy, his house (complete with bomb shelter) and its history.



### Day 4, Friday, 8th May 2015, Gozo



The day started with a 20 minute ferry trip from Malta to the Island of Gozo where the landscape is dotted with stone farmhouses and baroque churches. We visited the Azure Window which is huge archway arising from the sea which is intensely deep blue.

Next we were driven up to the Ta' Pinu National Shrine. It is a centre of pilgrimage for both the Gozitans and the Maltese. It is dedicated to the

Blessed Virgin Mary. We participated in the celebration of Holy Mass there. After lunch we visited the Ggantija Temples, the world's oldest megalithic monuments, even older than the pyramids of Egypt and Stonehenge.



## Day 5, Saturday, 9th May 2015 Mdina/Rabat



The Arabs divided the Roman town of Melita into 2 parts: the citadel they called Mdina, (meaning town) and the rest of the old settlement Rabat, (meaning suburb). Mdina has a population of just 400, while Rabat has 11000. Mdina is a fortified medieval town on a large hill in the centre of Malta. It was the ancient capital of Malta. Rabat is intimately related to the introduction of Christianity. St. Paul was shipwrecked and is said to have lived three months in a cave below the walls of this Roman city. In Rabat we visited St Paul's Grotto and St Paul's catacombs.



We took a short boat ride to the barren St. Paul's Island where St. Paul was shipwrecked. Workmen were in the process of restoring the statue of St. Paul.



The day ended after we visited the Upper Barrakka Garden (Valletta) and visited the HQ of MASMOM. We then celebrated evening mass at the Church of Our Lady of Victories. This church was built to commemorate the defeat of the Ottomans by the Knights in the Great Siege.

## Day 6: Sunday, 10 May 2015

On the morning of our departure, we were driven to the sanctuary of Our Lady of Millieha in the northern part of Malta housed in a crypt of the natural caves. The Byzantium fresco in the Church showing the Virgin holding the baby Jesus was said to have been painted by St Luke who was shipwrecked together with St Paul. We then visited the scenic Dingli Cliffs, the highest point of Malta island.

Lucky for us, the restored Fort St. Elmo was finally opened to the public on this, our last day. This Fort was the scene of a fierce battle which bore the brunt of the early attacks on Malta by the Ottomans. Three Knights made the last stand in a small chapel and fought to the last man.

Our last stop in Malta before we set out for the airport was the interesting Marsaxlokk Sunday Market which imparted a lasting poignant feel of all things Maltese with its native products, souvenirs, goods and foodstuff.



24 June 2015

## Nativity of St. John the Baptist

According to tradition, St John the Baptist's birthday is celebrated on June 24. One of the greatest saint and the precursor of our Lord Jesus Christ, St John is also the patron saint of the Sovereign Military Order Of Malta.

Many Knights and Dames including their families attended Mass celebrated by Fr. Edward Lim at the Mt. Alvernia Chapel on this special occasion.

In his homily, he reminded us to be relevant to the real world as Knights and Dames, so as to remain true to the principles enshrined in the inspiring motto "Tuito Fidei et Obsequium Pauperum".

Our conventual Chaplin, Archbishop Emeritus Nicholas Chia was also present at the Mass to the pleasant surprise of all.

The celebration ended with fellowship at the Dunearn, NUSS Guild House - Bukit Timah Campus.





## The Spirituality of Falconry

The Knights of Malta famously paid the Holy Roman Emperor Charles V and his mother Queen Joanna of Castile as monarchs of Sicily, an annual tribute on All Saints' Day of one Maltese falcon (more commonly known as the peregrine falcon) for the grant of Malta, Tripoli and Gozo in 1530. These majestic birds of prey were highly prized after the master falconers from the Knights of Malta had trained them for use in hunting. These trained falcons are reminiscent of how reconciliation with God returns us to our original state in Eden when we exercised dominion over "the birds of the air" (Gen 1:28). Falconry mirrors several aspects of Christian spiritual faith formation.



In the taming process called "manning" to acclimatize the wild falcon to human beings and the human world, the hood is the most important piece of training equipment worn over the falcon's head to keep the falcon calm in unfamiliar surroundings. The believer is similarly "hooded" by our Lord until he learns to trust in Him completely especially in situations beyond his comfort zone for he "walks by faith and not by sight" (2 Cor 5:7).

"Jesses", two leather strips used as a leash are harnessed unto the falcon's legs during the initial period of training when the falcon is taught to return to the falconer after hunting using an artificial lure. The distance between lure and falconer is increased until the falcon may be freed of these jesses. These jesses symbolise the Traditions of the Church and Scriptures that the believer holds fast to "whether by word of mouth or by letter" (2 Thess 2:15) during the pilgrim walk of the Church Militant in this world.



The bells on the falcon when in full flight ring to let the master falconer know its location and assure that it will never be lost. The ring of the bells are akin to the prayer of the believer flying in freedom secure in his belief that his prayer will reach his Master so that he will never wander from doing the bidding of His will. Just as the wild animals returned to be with Jesus as the angels tended to Him in the desert after He successfully repelled Satan (Mark 1:13). Finally, the well-trained falcon flies free to hunt, just as those who hope in the Lord will soar on wings with renewed strength (Isaiah 40:31).







8 April 2014

## Update On Archbishop Emeritus Nicholas Chia

The overall health of Archbishop Emeritus (AE) Nicholas Chia who had intracranial hemorrhage after a fall continues to improve with resumption of a rehabilitation program after he was transferred to St. Theresa's Home from Thye Hua Kwan Community Hospital. His legs remain weak and he mobilizes with wheelchair assistance. AE Chia has adjusted well at the Home by keeping occupied in attending morning mass at the chapel and participating in the individualized therapy sessions in the afternoons.



Family and friends, including members of the Order of Malta, regularly visit him during the official visiting hours from 3-5 pm daily. He relishes tucking in his favorite local delicacies such as Char Kway Teow, Laksa and Chiu Kueh whenever his visitors bring him out to the nearby food centre. He was thrilled during the Lunar New Year with the lion dance performance at St Theresa's Home and further exhibited good recovery of his linguistic skills by reading out the words on the signboards at his excursion to the Gardens by the Bay. His sister Mabel and friends were pleased to note that his sense of humor was intact with his frequent joke-telling.



AE Chia celebrated his 77th birthday on 8 April 2015 and among many visitors, he was most happy to see his old friend the Archbishop Emeritus Of Kuala Lumpur, Soter Fernandez. Many stayed with him well after the visiting hours and he was visibly happy to see his friends again. Let us thank God for His wonderful blessings and continue to remember AE Chia in our prayers and hope he recovers fully soon.

2015

### Upcoming Events:

#### 4th July (Saturday)

Archdiocese SG50 Mass

Venue: Indoor Stadium

Time: 12:30 p.m.

#### 29th August (Saturday)

Mass-The passion of St. John the Baptist

Venue: Mt. Alvernia Chapel

Time: 6:00 p.m.

#### 6th - 8th September

Celebration of the 450th Anniversary of the Great Siege of Malta

Venue: Malta

#### 25th October (Sunday)

SMOM Singapore Outreach Project: Mass and outing with elderly from the St Theresa's Home (inclusive of lunch)

Time: 10:00 am - 4:00 p.m.

#### 10th December (Thursday)

End-of-Year Thanksgiving Mass & Dinner

Venue: Mt. Alvernia Chapel

Time: 6:00 p.m.